LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION
Technology Initiative Grant Program
Client Web Site Evaluation System

ACCESS CHALLENGES ASSESSMENT

INSTRUCTIONS

LSC seeks to ensure that the technology systems developed and expanded through the TIG program benefit as much of the client eligible population as possible. In this regard, LSC has highlighted the particular needs of persons with disabilities, those who have limited literacy or limited English proficiency (LEP), and individuals who lack access to computers or the knowledge required to use them.[1]

Meeting these needs poses tremendous challenges. The range of social inequalities that make these groups more likely to live in poverty than many other groups has similarly contributed to the so-called "digital divide." TIG grantees' ability to significantly alleviate the digital divide's impact on client groups is limited by its scope and programs' inadequate resources. Moreover, addressing this problem, like efforts to provide all groups with equal access to justice, is an ongoing task, in which success is measured in relative rather than absolute terms. At the same time, however, TIG grantees can implement strategies that increase the benefits that available and emerging technologies provide client groups.

This "Access Challenges Assessment" should be completed by the Web site's design and evaluation team. It is designed to obtain information about:

1. Specific measures grantees have implemented to achieve the goals of increasing the availability and benefits of their Web sites to persons with disabilities, those who have limited literacy or limited English proficiency (LEP), and individuals who lack access to computers or lack the knowledge or experience needed to use them.

2. Obstacles grantees must overcome to achieve the goals identified in #1 above. LSC assumes that limited financial resources are a major problem. In this survey we seek information about the non-financial obstacles programs confront; and

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[1] Legal Services Corporation, *Using Technology Innovations to Strengthen the Delivery Systems of State Justice Systems. Technology Initiative Grant Program Status Report*, March 2003. Pp. 22-23, Appendix I; Legal Services Corporation, *Notice of Availability of Funds, Technology Initiative Grants, 2003*. On 1/12/04, LSC published a draft program letter on "Services to Clients with Limited English Proficiency." See the LSC Resource Library website (www.lri.lsc.gov).

3. Non-financial resources programs need to make meaningful progress toward the goals identified in #1 above. Again, LSC assumes that essential financial resources are not available. Accordingly, LSC seeks information about the non-financial resources programs need.

Grantees should not report information for each individual question on the assessment tool. Instead, they should provide an assessment of their work to date and plans for future work in each area (e.g., limited literacy, limited English proficiency).

LSC does not expect grantees to meet specific standards in these areas, especially given that no agreed upon standards exist among experts in the field. LSC seeks this information for two major reasons. First, it should help Web site managers identify and analyze the challenges inherent in providing Web-based materials to client populations with special needs.

Second, the data individual grantees across the country generate will enable LSC to develop unique national "state of the field" information about the range of challenges grantees face in using Web-based approaches to serve populations with special needs, the resources needed to address these needs, and successful strategies that have been implemented in this area. These national data should help LSC, its grantees, other legal services providers, and other experts and funders to:

1. Identify major challenges, promising strategies, and needed expertise and technical assistance in this area;

2. Inform on-going discussions of reasonable standards; and

3. Devise fund raising strategies that can generate the resources required to better meet these challenges.

For questions or additional information, please contact Bristow Hardin, LSC, Office of Program Performance, 202-295-1553, hardinb@lsc.gov.